

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

I work at Oak Hill School and Options Unlimited in a group home with developmentally disabled individuals. I've been at Community Options for just over a year and Oak Hill for over 9 years. I've been working in human services for more than 17 years.

I live in Bloomfield with my kids and grandchildren. My 26-year-old stepson was in a car wreck in June 2009 that left him disabled. So, in addition to working I take care of him. I have a PCA that helps, but we only have funding to cover the time that I'm at work.

The cuts we are facing for DDS, we're going to have our hours cut. I've already had mine cut twice. The people we serve are the most vulnerable residents of Connecticut and they are going to lose valuable services they need. Nobody is going to get the quality care they deserve.

Personally, the medical coverage we get is too expensive. I have to work two jobs to pay for the medical insurance I get from Oak Hill. When I lost hours at Oak Hill, I had to find another job just to cover my insurance costs.

I became a caregiver because that's what I naturally do. My mother works at ARC in New York. I'd rather be taking care of people than anything else, just to give them a better quality of life. I do this in my job and outside.

We need you think about the people we are serving and not make cuts to our budget. We are providing a better quality of life for so many people. They cannot go back to the way they lived before. If we lose our jobs, or lose hours, that puts more of a burden on the state for assistance. Please don't cut the budget for DDS and protect the services we provide and the non-profit safety net. Thank you.

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